Statement for Hearing of the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, House Government Reform Committee on the National Strategy for Victory in Iraq

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Kenneth Katzman, CRS Specialist

According to its November 30, 2005, "Strategy for Victory," the Bush Administration states that the definition of "victory" will be met when Iraq, in the long term:

> 1. ...Has defeated the terrorists and neutralized the insurgency.
>
> 2. ...Is peaceful, united, stable, democratic, and secure, where Iraqis have the institutions and resources they need to govern themselves justly and provide security for their country.
>
> 3. ...Is a partner in the global war on terror and the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, integrated into the international community, an engine for regional economic growth, and proving the fruits of democratic governance to the region.

In several speeches on Iraq since late 2005, President Bush cited successful elections and the growth of the Iraqi security forces as evidence that U.S. policy will produce a stable Iraq, while acknowledging many of the unexpected security and political difficulties encountered. Congress has mandated two major periodic Administration reports on progress in stabilizing Iraq. A Defense Department quarterly report, which DOD has titled "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," is required by a FY2005 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-13). The latest version was issued in May 2006 and provides some of the information below. A different report, first issued April 6, 2006 ("1227 Report"), was required by Section 1227 of the Defense Authorization Act for FY2006 (P.L. 109-163).

To date, there are mounting U.S. combat deaths and financial costs — estimated by CRS to be $320 billion appropriated for Iraq thus far – without unambiguous signs of accomplishing the long term goals outlined in the strategy. Some might argue that there is not perceptible progress toward these goals. The combination of increasing costs without clearly demonstrated progress has intensified a debate within the United States over whether to wind down U.S. involvement without completely accomplishing the President's stipulated long term goals.

Political Sources of the Violence

I want to devote much of my time to relating the ongoing violence in Iraq to what can be argued are significant remaining structural defects in the political system set up by the United States and Iraqi faction leaders after the fall of Saddam Hussein. The character of the political system is crucial because, contrary to Administration expectations before the war, Iraq's various communities

did not all welcome the fall of Saddam. Instead, the major communities in Iraq see the political system as a "winner-take-all," "life and death" contest. The Kurds and Shiite Arabs saw the fall of Saddam Hussein as a way to redress the abuses they suffered under Saddam Hussein. The Sunni Arabs saw the invasion and the U.S.-backed transition as a humiliation that left the minority Sunnis vulnerable to slaughter and repression at the hands of the victorious Shiites and Kurds.

The Administration set up a political transition mechanism based on one-man one-vote system. Because the Shiite Arabs are so numerous (an estimated 60% of the Iraqi population), this system virtually guaranteed that Shiite Arabs would dominate the elected governments. Sunni resentment was assured as well, because the Sunnis can never hope to return to power under this electoral system. The only way they can prevail, in the Sunni view, is by overturning the political process altogether through violence.

The Administration answers this criticism by asserting that Sunnis are moving into the political process, and that the post-Saddam transition roadmap does not inherently cause Sunni opposition. My prepared statement has the list of the winning blocs in the two parliamentary elections held in 2005 and, as you can see, there was a distinct change in between the two major elections. The Sunnis who actively participated in the January 2005 elections were primarily westernized Sunnis who had long accepted the U.S. invasion to topple Saddam. Some, such as Ghazi al-Yawar, served in top jobs in the occupation era (2003-2004) and the 2004-2005 transition government of Iyad al-Allawi. The December 2005 election, however, saw the participation of what could be called "skeptical Sunnis" - Sunnis who had opposed the U.S. invasion and boycotted previous elections. Those in this category include Adnan al-Dulaymi of the General People's Council and Mahmoud Mashhadani of the National Dialogue Council who is now speaker of the Council of Representatives (parliament).

Election Results (January and December)

Slate/Party	Seats (Jan. 05)	Seats (Dec. 05)
UIA (Shiite Islamist); Sadr formally joined list for Dec. vote	140	128
Kurdistan Alliance (PUK and KDP)	75	53
Iraqis List (secular, Allawi); added some mostly Sunni parties for Dec. vote	40	25
Iraq Concord Front (Sunni). Main Sunni bloc; not in Jan. vote	—	44
Dialogue National Iraqi Front (Sunni, Saleh al-Mutlak) Not in Jan. vote	—	11
Iraqi National Congress (Chalabi). Was part of UIA list in Jan. 05 vote	—	0
Iraqis Party (Yawar, Sunni); Part of Allawi list in Dec. vote	5	—
Iraqi Turkomen Front (Turkomen, Kirkuk-based, pro-Turkey)	3	1
National Independent and Elites (Jan)/Risalyun (Mission, Dec) pro-Sadr	3	2
People's Union (Communist, non-sectarian); on Allawi list in Dec. vote	2	—
Kurdistan Islamic Group (Islamist Kurd)	2	5
Islamic Action (Shiite Islamist, Karbala)	2	0
National Democratic Alliance (non-sectarian, secular)	1	—
Rafidain National List (Assyrian Christian)	1	1
Liberation and Reconciliation Gathering (Sunni, secular)	1	3
Ummah (Nation) Party. (Secular, Mithal al-Alusi, former INC activist)	0	1
Yazidi list (small Kurdish, heterodox religious minority in northern Iraq)	—	1

Number of polling places: January: 5,200; December: 6,200.

Eligible voters: 14 million in January election; 15 million in October referendum and December.
Turnout: January: 58% (8.5 million votes)/ October: 66% (10 million)/ December: 75% (12 million).

It also is not clear that those who have entered government are representative of or can control those Sunnis who support and form the insurgency. The all-important Muslim Scholars Association (MSA), which is widely believed close to insurgent groups, has remained outside the political process and continues to demand a timetable for U.S. withdrawal. It is also important to note that many of the Sunnis entered the December 2005 elections with the hope that doing so would strengthen their hand in the promised constitution amendment process. This was to begin when the new Council of Representatives was seated, but sources indicate that the process of negotiating amendments is not likely to begin until September. These same observers say that the amendment process has been slowed because the Sunnis have judged that the Kurds and Shiites will not entertain the major amendments sought by the Sunnis, particularly modification of the constitution's provisions for the formation and powers of new "regions."

Furthermore, those Sunni leaders that are in the cabinet are perceived as included in the government because the United States pressured the Shiites to included them, and not because of any genuine Sunni empowerment. As such, the presence of these Sunnis in the government does not end the sense of humiliation and vulnerability on the "Sunni street." As evidence of the fragility of Sunni participation in government, the main Sunni blocs began a boycott of parliament in early July after the kidnapping of one of its parliamentarians, Tayseer Mashhadani. Reports said the Sunnis might expand their boycott to a suspension of Sunnis' participation in the cabinet.

The Insurgent Challenge

It is these structural political dynamics that, in my view, have caused the Sunni Arab-led insurgency against U.S. and Iraqi forces to defy most U.S. expectations of intensity and duration. Although hesitant to assess the size of the insurgency, U.S. commanders say that insurgents probably number approximately 12,000-20,000. Some Iraqi intelligence officials have publicly advanced higher estimates of about 40,000 active insurgents, helped by another 150,000 persons in supporting roles. Insurgent attacks — characterized mostly by roadside bombs, mortar and other indirect fire, and direct fire weapons as well as larger suicide bombings — numbered about 100 per day during most of 2005, and the DOD report cited above now puts that number at about 90 attacks per day, a figure including both insurgent and sectarian-related attacks.

As discussed in the Administration's "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq" (November 30, 2005), many of the insurgents are motivated by opposition to perceived U.S. rule in Iraq, to democracy, and to Shiite political dominance. Others want to bring the Baath Party back into power, although, according to many experts, some would settle for a larger Sunni role in governance without the Baath. Still others are pro-Al Qaeda fighters, either foreign or Iraqi, that want to defeat the United States and spread radical Islam throughout the region. The insurgent groups appear to be loosely coordinated within cities and the wider provinces, but probably not nationally. However, in early 2006, suggesting broader coordination, a group of five insurgent factions announced the formation of a national "Mujahedin Shura (Council)" led by an Iraqi, Abdullah Rashid al-Baghdadi. This grouping purportedly consists mostly of Iraqi factions but includes foreign fighters formerly led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

The key to assessing the insurgency is to determine its degree of popular support. The insurgency appears to be drawing on substantial Sunni resentment for its strength. We can see in its pattern of attacks – and particularly its ability to operate almost with impunity in urban areas – that

it clearly has some popular support in the Sunni majority areas of Iraq. Whole neighborhoods of Baghdad, including Amiriya, Jihad, Amal, and Doura, appear to be hosting insurgents, not to mention the Anbar Province city of Ramadi, for example. One recent press account quotes Iraqis as saying that the upscale and previously quiet Baghdad district of Mansour is now penetrated by insurgents. We have anecdotal reports from observers that insurgent mortar crews are often active in some of these districts, lobbing indirect fire into the Green Zone and elsewhere without any interference or any tip-off to the Iraqi security forces. The recent trends in the violence - particularly the kidnappings of groups of 50-80 persons at a time in broad daylight, in bustling areas of Baghdad - demonstrates the freedom of movement that the insurgents have. These are clear indicators that elements of the population are actively harboring and facilitation insurgent operations.

The question is, why do the insurgents have popular support? It is because the Sunni population feels defenseless, and believes U.S. forces to be aligned with the Shiites and Kurds. The Sunnis perceive that the Iraqi security forces are essentially the tools of the Shiites and Kurds to obtain revenge for Saddam-era abuses. The Sunnis therefore see the insurgents as their only source of leverage and protection, and it is unlikely that a critical mass of Sunnis would cooperate in dismantling insurgent groups.

Foreign Insurgents/Zarqawi Faction.[1] A numerically small but politically significant component of the insurgency is non-Iraqi. Some studies, such as one by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, released in September 2005, said that about 3,500 foreign fighters are in Iraq. According to the study, the foreign fighters come mostly from Algeria, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, with Saudis constituting only about 350 of the 3,000 estimated foreign fighters. The Department of Defense said on October 20, 2005, that 312 foreign fighters had been captured in Iraq since April 2005. A major portion of the foreign fighters was commanded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a 40-year-old Jordanian Arab who reputedly fought in Afghanistan during the 1980s alongside other Arab volunteers against the Soviet Union. He was killed in a June 7, 2006, U.S. airstrike and has been succeeded by the little known Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (also known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri), an Egyptian national.

The foreign fighters have been a U.S. focus because of their alleged perpetration of large scale suicide and other bombings against both combatant and civilian targets, as well as kidnappings and beheadings of foreign nationals and diplomats. However, their more policy-significant contribution to the overall insurgency has been their focus on fomenting Sunni — Shiite civil war in Iraq. Zarqawi's group apparently was responsible for the February 22 attack on the Askariya Shiite mosque in Samarra that has sparked significant sectarian violence. Zarqawi's successors issued a purported statement on June 13, 2006 that he would continue to emphasize attacks on Shiite civilians. It is also unclear whether Zarqawi's faction, after his death, will attempt to conduct activities outside Iraq. Zarqawi's faction reputedly committed the August 19, 2005, failed rocket attack in the Jordanian port of Aqaba against two U.S. warships docked there, as well as the November 10, 2005, bombing of Western-owned hotels in Amman, Jordan.

Sectarian Violence/Militias/Civil War?

The combination of Iraqi insurgent activity, and the dedicated strategy of the Zarqawi faction, has caused a marked increase in Sunni - Shiite violence. Top U.S. officials have said recently that sectarian-motivated violence has now displaced the insurgency as the primary security challenge in Iraq. U.S. officials, both military and civilian, have said the sectarian violence risks becoming all-out civil war, but that they do not consider Iraq in a civil war now. Some experts consider the

[1] See CRS Report RL32217, *Iraq and Al Qaeda: Allies or Not?*, by Kenneth Katzman.

character of violence we are now seeing in Iraq to show the hallmarks of a low-grade civil war. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld said in March 2006 that Iraqi forces, not U.S.-led international forces, would take the lead in trying to suppress any all-out civil war.

Sectarian violence emerged as a major issue after the February 22, 2006, bombing of the Askariya Shiite mosque in Samarra. The destruction of its dome set off a wave of purported Shiite militia attacks on about 60 Sunni mosques and the killing of about 400 persons in the first days after the sectarian attacks. Some accounts say that well over 5,000 Iraqis have been killed in sectarian violence since then, with about 1,600 killed during June 2006 alone, according to statistics from Iraq's central morgue. This is about double the number of killings as during the same period in 2005. Officials from the Iraqi government and the International Organization of Migration (IOM) said in June 2006 that there are now about 130,000 internally displaced persons in Iraq: Iraqis who are fleeing their homes in mixed Baghdad neighborhoods or provinces because of threats from one sect or the other.[2] To counter the Shiite-led violence, in February 2006, Sunni Arabs began forming militias, such as the *Anbar Revolutionaries*, to guard against Shiite and Kurdish sectarian attacks. Other Iraqis are setting up neighborhood watch squads and impromptu checkpoints to prevent security forces or strangers from entering their neighborhoods.

Victims of sectarian violence arrive at the central morgue usually bound and gagged, but often dumped in rivers, facilities, vehicles, or fields. We have seen pictures of severed heads turning up in fruit crates in Baquba and elsewhere. On Thursday June 29, it was reported in the New York Times that Sunni insurgents and Shiite militiamen fought a one day pitched battle north of Baquba. In some of the incidents I cited above, in which civilians have been abducted, the abductors have reportedly sorted out the sects of the victims, letting members of their sect go free. Another incident that might represent an escalation of this trend was the killings of about 41 Sunni civilians at the hands of Shiite gunmen in the Jihad district of Baghdad on July 10, 2006.

Why did the sectarian violence accelerate in 2006? Although Zarqawi's faction began actively targeting Shiite civilians in 2005, Shiite militias did not immediately respond to the violence. Apparently, many Shiites sought to obey admonitions from Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani not to retaliate to Sunni-inspired violence. Ultimately, however, the unanswered violence was too much to bear, and the Shiites, through their militia organizations, began to take revenge. To this extent, Sistani's calls for restraint are now going unheeded.

The sectarian violence has caused U.S. officials to assert that the new government must not only better vet their new security forces, but also control or dismantle the eleven independent militias identified by Iraqi officials. Although U.S. commanders have, to date, mostly tolerated the presence of militias, there are indications that U.S. forces are moving to curb them, with or without direct Iraqi government assistance. In one example, U.S. and Iraqi forces killed about 16 purported Mahdi fighters at a site in Baghdad on March 26, 2006, although Iraq's Shiite politicians say the site was a mosque and those present there were unarmed. Additional clashes with Mahdi fighters took place last week (July 6, 2006). U.S. forces are also moving to prevent security forces personnel from engaging in sectarian violence, as discussed later. The three major militias are:

- *Kurdish Peshmerga.* Together, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan may have as many as 100,000 *peshmergas* (fighters), most of whom are operating as unofficial security organs in northern Iraqi cities. Some are integrated into the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and deploy in such cities as Mosul and Baghdad. However, the *peshmerga* are technically legal because the three

[2] Knickermeyer, Ellen. "Thousands of Iraqis Flee to Avoid Spread of Violence." *Washington Post*, March 29, 2006.

Kurdish provinces are an officially recognized region, with its own regional government, under the newly adopted constitution. Regions, according to the constitution, are permitted to maintain internal security forces. The *peshmerga* have not been widely cited for recent sectarian violence, with the possible exception of the city of Kirkuk, which the Kurds are attempting to control.

- *Badr Brigades.* The militia of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) numbers about 5,000 and is led by Hadi al-Amiri (a member of parliament). The Badr Brigades are technically illegal because they do not report to any duly recognized regional government. The Badr Brigades were recruited, trained, and equipped by Iran's Revolutionary Guard, which is aligned with Iran's hardliners. During the Iran-Iraq war, Badr guerrillas conducted forays from Iran into southern Iraq to attack Baath Party officials. The Badr "Organization" - a renaming of the Badr Brigades, registered as a separate political entity, in addition to its SCIRI parent, for the elections in 2005. Badr militiamen play unofficial policing roles in Basra, Najaf, and elsewhere in southern Iraq, and many Badr members also reputedly are in the ISF, particularly the police, which is led by the SCIRI-dominated Interior Ministry. A related militia, called the "Wolf Brigade" (now renamed the Freedom Brigade) is a Badr offshoot that is formally part of the police. It is also led by a SCIRI activist. Sunni charges of Badr "death squad" activities first gained strength on November 16, 2005, with the discovery by U.S. forces of a secret Ministry of Interior detention facility. The facility, allegedly run by Badr militiamen, housed 170 Sunni Arab detainees who allegedly were tortured. At least two other such facilities, run by the Wolf Brigade, were uncovered in December 2005. In another example of militia strength, on August 9, 2005, Badr fighters reportedly helped SCIRI member Hussein al-Tahaan forcibly replace Ali al-Tamimi as mayor of Baghdad.

- *Mahdi Army.* U.S. officials say Sadr's Mahdi Army militia has now grown to about 20,000 fighters, regaining its strength since U.S. military operations put down Mahdi uprisings in April and August of 2004 in Sadr City. The Mahdi Army ended active anti-U.S. combat and Sadr City has been relatively peaceful, but Mahdi fighters, reportedly with the tacit approval of U.S. forces, continued to patrol that district and parts of other Shiite cities, particularly Basra. Mahdi assertiveness in Basra — coupled with the allied *Fadilah* party's attempts to counter SCIRI and control the Basra provincial government — has partly accounted for a sharp deterioration of relations since July 2005 between Iraqi officials in Basra and the British forces based there. About 20 British soldiers have died in attacks in that area since then, including a British helicopter shot down in May 2006. In one dispute in 2005, British forces forcibly rescued British special forces soldiers taken into official custody in Basra. A self-declared Shiite anti-coalition militia, the Iraq-Abbas Brigades, that announced its formation on July 3, 2006, is likely a Mahdi Army offshoot

An Iranian Role? The increased sectarian activity of Shiite militias raises the question of Iranian involvement in Iraq. Pro-Iranian parties dominate the post-Saddam government in Iraq and it is widely believed Iran is working to keep those parties in power. That goal, in and of itself, does not conflict with those of the United States, which also wants to see the duly elected government continue in office unimpeded. The U.S. fear, perhaps justified, is that Iran might also use influence in Iraq to challenge the United States more broadly, such as on the issue of Iran's purported ambition to develop a nuclear weapon. There are some indications that Iran might be trying to develop such

an option in Iraq by supporting militant Shiite parties that are prepared to step up operations against U.S. and British forces. On June 22, 2006 General George Casey reiterated previous U.S. statements that the Qods Force (Jerusalem force) of Iran's Revolutionary Guard is assisting Shiite armed factions in Iraq with explosives and weapons. The most likely recipient is the Shiite faction of Moqtada al-Sadr and its affiliates, including the Fadilah party and the newly declared Iraq-Abbas Brigades.

U.S. Efforts to Restore Security

At times, such as after the capture of Saddam Hussein in December 2003 and after all three elections in 2005, U.S. officials have expressed optimism that the insurgency would subside, only to see it continue. As outlined in the "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq," the Administration continues to try to refine its stabilization strategy.

"Clear, Hold, and Build"Strategy/Provincial Reconstruction Teams. The Administration is now pursuing a strategy called "clear, hold, and build," intended to create and expand stable enclaves by positioning Iraqi forces and U.S. civilian reconstruction experts in areas cleared of insurgents. The strategy, based partly on an idea advanced by Andrew Krepinevich in the September/October 2005 issue of *Foreign Affairs*,[3] says that the United States should devote substantial resources to preventing insurgent re-infiltration and promoting reconstruction in selected areas, cultivating these areas as a model that would attract support and be expanded to other areas and eventually throughout Iraq. In conjunction with the new U.S. strategy, the Administration is forming Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), a concept used in Afghanistan. Each PRT is civilian led, composed of about 100 U.S. State Department officials and contract personnel, to assist local Iraqi governing institutions, such as the provincial councils (elected in January 2005), representatives of the Iraqi provincial governors, and local ministry representatives. As reported in the *Washington Post* on January 15, 2006, the concept ran into U.S. military objections to taking on expanded missions at a time when it is trying to draw down its force. The internal debate has apparently been resolved with an agreement by DOD to provide security to the U.S.-run PRTs.

Thus far, five PRTs have been inaugurated: in Mosul, Kirkuk, Hilla, Baghdad, and Anbar Province. Plans are for three more U.S. led PRTs and four coalition partner-run PRTs, as well as perhaps eight Iraqi-run PRTs. To date, Britain has agreed to establish a PRT in Basra, and Italy has agreed to form one in Dhi Qar province.

U.S. Counter-Insurgent Combat Operations. The Administration position is that continued combat operations against the insurgency are required. About 132,000 U.S. troops are in Iraq (down from 160,000 there during the December election period and down from 2005 baseline levels of 138,000), with about another 50,000 troops in Kuwait and the Persian Gulf region supporting OIF. The prospects for force reductions are discussed in the section on options below.

A major focus of U.S. counter-insurgent combat remains Anbar Province, which includes the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi, the latter of which is the most restive of all Iraqi cities. An additional 1,500 U.S. troops were sent to Ramadi in May 2006 to combat U.S./Iraqi apparent loss of control there. About 40,000 U.S. troops are in Anbar alone. Differing degrees of combat continue consistently in about two dozen other Sunni-inhabited towns, including Baqubah, Balad, Tikrit, Mosul, Samarra, Hit, Haditha, and Tal Affar, as well as several small towns south of Baghdad, such as Yusufiya. In the run-up to the December 15 elections, U.S. and Iraqi forces conducted several major operations (for example Operations Matador, Dagger, Spear, Lightning, Sword, Hunter, Steel Curtain, and Ram) to clear foreign fighters and other insurgents from Sunni cities along the

[3] Krepinevich, Andrew. "How to Win in Iraq," *Foreign Affairs*, Sept./Oct. 2005.

Euphrates River. A major focus was to combat foreign fighters that entered Iraq near the Iraq-Syria border towns of Qaim, Husaybah, and Ubaydi.

Building Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)[4]

A major pillar of U.S. policy is to equip and train Iraqi security forces (ISF) that could secure Iraq by themselves. President Bush stated in his June 28, 2005 speech, "Our strategy can be summed up this way: As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down."[5] The most recent DOD "Measuring Stability" report, released May 2006, generally reiterates U.S. official statements of progress in Iraq and contains details of efforts to improve the training and performance of the ISF.

The tables below detail the composition of the ISF and provide Administration assessments of force readiness. As of June 28, there are 268,400 total ISF: 116,100 "operational" military forces under the Ministry of Defense and 152,300 police and police commando forces "trained and equipped" under the Ministry of Interior. The U.S. commander of the ISF training mission (Multi-National Transition Security Command - Iraq, MNSTC-I), Gen. Martin Dempsey, says the total force goal of 325,000 ISF will be met by the end of 2006. However, police figures include possibly tens of thousands (according to the GAO on March 15, 2005) who are absent-without-leave or might have deserted. The police generally live with their families, rather than in barracks, and are therefore hard to account for.

According to the latest DOD "Measuring Stability" report, about 50,000 ISF — 71 military battalions and two police battlions — are "in the lead" on operations. No battalions are rated as "fully independent." U.S. officials and reports praise their performance in each of the three election days in 2005, and General Casey praised the ISF's performance after the February 22 Samarra mosque bombing, although he did note some police units allowed militia fighters through checkpoints to attack Sunnis. U.S. commanders also cite as evidence of their growing confidence the September 2005 offensive in Tal Afar in which Iraqi units were in the lead, although some outside accounts call that assessment into question.

U.S. commanders say they are making progress preparing ISF units to assume greater responsibility. In March 2006, the commander of MNF-I Gen. Peter Chiarelli said that ISF forces might control 75% of Iraqi territory by the end of 2006. As of May 2006, U.S. and partner forces have now turned over to the ISF 34 out of 111 foward operation bases, and responsibility for "battle space" in several areas, including:

- about 90 square miles of Baghdad, including Sadr City, the International (Green Zone), Haifa Street, and Dora district — National Police and 6th Iraqi Army Division (IAD);
- the entire provinces of Wasit, Qadissiyah, Nafaf, and Babil — 8th IAD (mostly Shiites);
- areas south and west of Mosul — 2nd and 3rd IAD, respectively;
- large parts of restive Salahuddin Province, including Tikrit, and of Tamim Province, including Kirkuk — 4th IAD (mostly Kurdish);
- areas west of Baghdad, including Abu Ghraib and the area around Habbaniyah (the first part of Anbar Province turned over to the ISF) — 1st and 6th IAD;

[4] For additional information, see CRS Report RS22093, *Iraq's New Security Forces: The Challenge of Sectarian and Ethnic Influences*, by Jeremy Sharp.

[5] Speech by President Bush can be found at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/news.releases/2005/06/print/20050628-7.html].

- Muthanna Province, turned over to ISF control in July 2006 in conjunction with the pullout of Japanese forces from the province.

However, some U.S. commanders and outside observers say that the ISF continue to lack an effective command structure, independent initiative, or commitment to the mission, and that it could fragment if U.S. troops draw down.[6] U.S. commanders have told journalists that it is common for half of an entire ISF unit to desert or refuse to undertake a specified mission.[7] A report on the Iraqi police by the offices of the Inspector General of the State and Defense Departments, released July 15, 2005, said that many recruits are only marginally literate, and some recruits are actually insurgents trying to infiltrate the ISF.[8]

A major issue is ethnic balance; U.S. commanders have acknowledged difficulty recruiting Sunni Arabs into the ISF and have said this is a deficiency they are trying to correct. Most of the ISF, particularly the police, are Shiites, with Kurdish units mainly deployed in the north. There are few units of mixed ethnicity, and, as discussed above, many Sunnis see the ISF as mostly Shiite and Kurdish instruments of repression and responsible for sectarian killings. That the new Interior Minister is not viewed as a hardline Shiite partisan might bring some corrective steps concerning the police. Even before his appointment, some Sunnis had been recruited to rebuild police forces in Mosul and Fallujah, which had virtually collapsed in 2004. As indicators of difficulty, in May 2006, new Sunni recruits deserted a graduation ceremony immediately after learning they would be deployed in Shiite-dominated areas of Iraq. Later in the month, Shiite and Kurdish ISF units clashed with each other. In part to gain greater control particularly over the National Police, the United States and Iraq announced a plan in May 2006 to consolidate all security forces (police and military) in Baghdad into one unified force. U.S. forces are also instructing residents not to cooperate with police units unless these forces are accompanied by coalition forces or can otherwise prove their authenticity.

There are growing allegations that some of the 145,000 members of the Facilities Protection Force, which is not formally under any ministry, may be involved in sectarian violence. The U.S. and Iraq began trying to rein in the force in May 2006 by placing it under some Ministry of Interior guidance, including issuing badges and supervising what types of weapons it uses.

[6] Fallows, James. "Why Iraq Has No Army." *Atlantic Monthly*, Dec. 2005.

[7] Castaneda, Antonio. "Iraqi Desertions Complicate U.S. Mission." *Associated Press*, January 31, 2006.

[8] Inspectors General. U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Defense. *Interagency Assessment of Iraqi Police Training*. July 15, 2005. P.3.

Ministry of Defense Forces

Force	Size/Strength	U.S. Funds Allocated
Iraqi Army	114,700 total; goal is 131,000. Forces in units are in 104 battalions (about 70,000 personnel), with 71 battalions (about 50,000) able to lead operations. 57 battalions (about 40,000) control their own "battle space." Trained for eight weeks, paid $60/month. Has mostly East bloc equipment, including 77 T-72 tanks donated by Poland.	$1.097 billion for facilities; $707 million for equipment; $656 million for training, personnel, and operations
Iraqi Intervention Force	About 3,000 personnel, included in Army total above. Trained for 13 weeks.	
Special Operations Forces	About 1,600 divided between Iraqi Counter-Terrorist Force (ICTF) and a Commando Battalion. Trained for 12 weeks, mostly in Jordan.	
Strategic Infrastructure Battalions	About 2,900 personnel in seven battalions to protect oil pipelines, electricity infrastructure. The goal is 11 battalions.	
Mechanized Police Brigade	About 1,500. Recently transferred from Ministry of Interior control.	
Air Force	About 600, its target size. Has 9 helicopters, 3 C-130s; 14 observation aircraft. Trained for six months. UAE and Jordan to provide other aircraft and helos.	$28 million allocated for air fields (from funds for Iraqi Army, above)
Navy	About 800, about the target size. Has a Patrol Boat Squadron and a Coastal Defense Regiment. Fields about 35 patrol boats for anti-smuggling and anti-infiltration. Controls naval base at Umm Qasra, Basra port, and Khor al-Amaya oil terminals. Some training by Australian Navy.	
Totals	116,100	
U.S./Other Trainers	U.S. training, including embedding trainers with Iraqi units, involves about 10,000 U.S. forces, run by MNSTC-I. Training at Taji, north of Baghdad; Kirkush, near Iranian border; and Numaniya, south of Baghdad. All 26 NATO nations at NATO Training Mission - Iraq (NTM-I) at Rustamiyah (300 trainers). Others trained at NATO bases in Norway and Italy. Jordan, Germany, and Egypt also have done training.	

Ministry of Interior Forces

Force	Size/Strength	U.S. Funds Allocated
Iraqi Police Service (IPS)	107,000, including 1,300 person Highway Patrol. Target size is 135,000 by 2007. Gets eight weeks of training, paid $60 per month. Police work out of police stations nationwide; not organized as battalions.	$ 1.806 billion allocated for training and technical assistance.
Center for Dignitary Protection	About 500 personnel	
National Police	About 26,500. Comprises "Police Commandos," Public Order Police," and "Mechanized Police." Organized into 28 battalions, 2 of which (about 1,500) are "in the lead" in counter-insurgency operations. Six battalions (about 4,000) control security in their areas. Overwhelmingly Shiite, but U.S. is attempting to recruit more Sunnis. Gets four weeks of counter-insurgency training.	
Emergency Response Unit	About 300, able to lead operations. Hostage rescue.	
Border Enforcement Department	About 18,000. Controls 258 border forts built or under construction. Has Riverine Police component to secure water crossings.	$437 million, $3 million of which is allocated to pay stipends to 150 former regime WMD personnel.
Totals (all forces)	152,300. Goal is 195,000	
Training	Training by 2,000 U.S. personnel as embeds and partners. Pre-operational training mostly at Jordan International Police Training Center; Baghdad Police College and seven academies around Iraq; and in UAE. Countries doing training aside from U.S.: Canada, Britain, Australia, Sweden, Poland, UAE, Denmark, Austria, Finland, Czech Republic, Germany (now suspended), Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Singapore, Belgium, and Egypt.	
Facilities Protection Service	Technically outside MOI. About 145,000 security guards protecting economic infrastructure.	$53 million allocated for this service thus far.

ISF Funding. The accelerated training and equipping of the Iraqis is a key part of U.S. policy. The Administration has been shifting much U.S. funding into this training and equipping mission. According to the State Department, a total of $5.036 billion in IRRF funds has been allocated to build (train, equip, provide facilities for, and in some cases provide pay for) the ISF. Of those funds, about $4.912 billion has been obligated as of May 30, and $4.519 billion of that has been disbursed. A FY2005 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-13) provided an additional $5.7 billion to equip and train the ISF, funds to be controlled by the Department of Defense and provided to MNSTC-I. (When spent, that would bring total ISF funding to $11 billion.) The conference report on the FY2006 supplemental (P.L. 109-234) provides about $3 billion of those funds, but withholds the remaining ISF facilities construction funding.

Non-U.S. Coalition Forces

According to the Administration, there are 28 countries (aside from the United States) contributing a total of about 19,000 peacekeeping forces to Iraq. The main non-U.S. contingent is that of Britain, which has about 7,500 forces based in Basra. However, several major contingents have left or are in the process of reducing troop levels in Iraq. This could represent progress, in that the departure of foreign forces might indicate that Iraqi forces can compensate for any withdrawals. On the other hand, many interpret this trend as an indicator of waning international support for the mission. Among recent major developments:

- Italy has reduced its force from 3,200 in September 2005 to about 1,700 currently, based in the southern city of Nasiriyah (Dhi Qar Province). Prime Minister Romano Prodi says all Italian troops will be out by the end of 2006.

- Ukraine, which lost eight of its soldiers in a January 2005 insurgent attack, completed withdrawal of its remaining 1,500 forces after the December 2005 elections.

- Bulgaria pulled out its 360-member unit after the December 15 Iraqi elections. However, in March 2006 it said it had sent in a 150-person force to take over guard duties of Camp Ashraf, a base in eastern Iraq where Iranian oppositionists are located.

- South Korea withdrew 270 of its almost 3,600 troops in June 2005, and, in line with a November 2005 decision, withdrew another 1,000 in May 2006, bringing its troop level to about 2,200 (based in Irbil in Kurdish-controlled Iraq). The remainder will stay through 2006.

- In June 2006, Japan began withdrawing its 600 Ground Self-Defense Forces from the Samawah area.

Options and Debate on an "Exit Strategy"

Some say that major new initiatives need to be considered to ensure success of the U.S. mission in Iraq. As U.S. public support for the U.S. commitment in Iraq has appeared to decline, debates have emerged over several congressional resolutions proposing an "exit strategy." Some of the ideas widely discussed are assessed below.

Re-Working the Political Structure. It flows from the above analysis that many Sunnis will only be satisfied by a major restructuring of Iraqi politics that makes the Sunnis full partners of

the other major communities. Both the Administration and its critics have identified the need to bring more Sunni Arabs into the political process and U.S. Ambassador Khalilzad has been reaching out to Sunni groups, with some success. The Administration maintains that a key to progress in this effort will be U.S. ability to persuade the Shiites and Kurds to agree to major amendments to the constitution during the four month amendment process that begins after a new government is seated. However, that effort has been delayed until September, according to observers. It is possible to argue that the Sunnis want a more dramatic political restructuring, possibly including the voiding of the elections of 2005 and a re-negotiated power sharing arrangement.

One idea for a dramatic power restructuring is to break Iraq up into three separate countries: one Kurdish, one Sunni Arab, and one Shiite Arab. However, many Middle East experts believe the idea is unworkable because none of the three would likely be self-sufficient and would likely fall firmly under the sway of Iraq's powerful neighbors.

A version of this idea, propounded by Senator Biden and Council on Foreign Relations expert Leslie Gelb (May 1, 2006, *New York Times* op-ed) is to form three autonomous regions, dominated by each of the major communities. According to the authors, doing so would ensure that these communities do not enter an all-out civil war with each other. The benefits of this idea is that implementing such a plan would reduce the Sunni sense of humiliation and occupation by removing U.S. and Shiite forces from their regions. However, the proposal does not detail how the Sunnis would be guaranteed an appropriate share of oil revenues. Some believe that, to alleviate Iraqi concerns about equitable distribution of oil revenues, an international organization should be tapped to distribute Iraq's oil revenues.

Negotiating With the Insurgents. Another idea is to try to co-opt the insurgents. In addition to exploring power sharing arrangements with moderate Sunni leaders, the Administration appears to have adopted a recommendation by early critics of U.S. policy to negotiate with some Sunni figures representing the insurgency (including members of the hardline Sunni Muslim Scholars Association, MSA) and even with some insurgent commanders. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld confirmed to journalists in June 2005 that such discussions had taken place, and Iraqi President Talabani said in May 2006 that he had had talks with insurgent factions as well. The U.S. talks reportedly have been intended to help U.S. forces defeat Zarqawi's foreign insurgent faction. In June 2006, Prime Minister Maliki announced an amnesty plan designed to persuade some insurgents and insurgent facilitators to end their activities. Although some Iraqi officials say that some insurgent groups want to explore the plan further, none has laid down arms to date. There are also elements of the plan that are unclear, including how to ensure that insurgents who have killed American soldiers are not granted amnesty. The insurgents who have attended previous talks want an increased role for Sunnis in government, and a timetable for withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, and it is uncertain that amnesty alone would persuade them to support the government. Some U.S. officials, as well as hardliners in Maliki's Shiite coalition, appear to believe that talking directly with insurgents increases insurgent leverage and emboldens them to continue attacks.

Troop Increase. Other options focus less on re-working Iraq's political structure and more on security-related options. Some have said that the United States should increase its troops in Iraq in an effort to prevent insurgents from re-infiltrating areas cleared by U.S. operations. Some experts believe the extra troops needed for such an effort might number about 100,000.[9] The Administration asserts that U.S. commanders feel that planned force levels are sufficient to complete the mission, and that U.S. commanders are able to request additional forces, if needed. Some experts believe that troop level increases would aggravate Sunni Arabs already resentful of the U.S. intervention in Iraq and that even many more U.S. troops would not necessarily produce stability and would appear

[9] Bersia, John. "The Courage Needed to Win the War," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 9, 2005.

to deepen the U.S. commitment without a clear exit strategy. Others believe that increasing U.S. force levels would further the impression that the Iraqi government depends on the United States for its survival.

Immediate Withdrawal. A more vigorous debate has emerged over whether and when the United States should reduce its security commitment to Iraq. Some Members argue that the United States should begin to withdraw virtually immediately. Supporters of this position tend to argue that the decision to invade Iraq and change its regime was a mistake in light of the failure thus far to locate WMD, that a continued large U.S. presence in Iraq is inflaming the insurgency, and that remaining in Iraq will result in additional U.S. casualties without securing U.S. national interests. Those who take this position include the approximately 50 Members of the "Out of Iraq Congressional Caucus," formed in June 2005. In November 2005, Representative John Murtha, a ranking member and former chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, publicly articulated a similar position, calling for an "immediate" pullout (over six months). His resolution (H.J.Res. 73) called for a U.S. withdrawal "at the earliest practicable date" and the maintenance of an "over the horizon" U.S. presence to help the ISF. A related resolution, H.Res. 571 (written by Representative Duncan Hunter, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee), expressed the sense "that the deployment of U.S. forces in Iraq be terminated immediately;" it failed 403-3 on November 18, 2005. Other bills, such as H.R. 3142, H.Con.Res. 197,, state that it [should be] U.S. policy not to maintain a permanent or long-term presence in Iraq. The conference report on the FY2006 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-234) omitted a provision to this effect that was in the House version.

Withdrawal Timetable. Another alternative is the setting of a timetable for a U.S. withdrawal. This has been exemplified by H.J.Res. 55, introduced by Rep. Neil Abercrombie, which calls on the Administration to begin a withdrawal by October 2006. H.Con.Res. 348, introduced by Rep. Mike Thompson, calls for a redeployment of U.S. forces no later than September 30, 2006. In November 2005, Senator Levin, who takes the view that the United States needs to force internal compromise in Iraq by threatening to withdraw, introduced an amendment to S. 1042 (FY2006 defense authorization bill) to compel the Administration to work on a timetable for withdrawal during 2006. Reportedly, on November 10, 2005, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee John Warner reworked the Levin proposal into an amendment that stopped short of setting a timetable for withdrawal, but required an Administration report on a "schedule for meeting conditions" that could permit a U.S. withdrawal. That measure, which also states in its preamble that "2006 should be a period of significant transition to full Iraqi sovereignty," achieved bi-partisan support, passing 79-19. It was incorporated, with only slight modifications by House conferees, in the conference report on the bill (H.Rept. 109-360, P.L. 109-163).

Responding to the November 2005 congressional action, President Bush and U.S. commanders remained adamant in their stated opposition to the setting of any timetable for troop pullouts, let alone an immediate pullout. During and after his June 13, 2006 visit to Baghdad, President Bush again appeared to rule out a pullout by stating that the United States would uphold its "commitment" to the Iraqi government, although he did suggest in trip-related comments that Iraqi officials need to plan their own future. Supporters of such positions maintain that the Iraqi government would collapse upon an immediate pullout, representing a victory for terrorists. H.Res. 861, stating that "..it is not in the national security interest of the United States to set an arbitrary date for the withdrawal or redeployment" of U.S. forces from Iraq, passed the House on June 16 by a vote of 256-153, with 5 voting "present." On June 22, the Senate debated two Iraq-related amendments to a FY2007 defense authorization bill (S.2766). One, offered by Senator Kerry, setting a July 1, 2007 deadline for U.S. redeployment from Iraq, was defeated 86-13. Another amendment, sponsored by

Senator Levin, called on the Administration to begin redeployment out of Iraq by the end of 2006, but with no deadline for full withdrawal. It was defeated 60-39.

Troop Reduction. The House and Senate debate occurred a few days before press reports appeared that Gen. Casey, during a visit to Washington in late June, had presented to President Bush options for a substantial drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq, beginning as early as September 2006. According to reports of the Casey plan, which the Administration says is one option and is dependent on security progress, U.S. force levels would drop to about 120,000 by September 2006, with a more pronounced reduction to about 100,000 by the end of 2007. The new reports are similar to some previous reports of plans for reduction. Previous such reported plans, such as those discussed in late 2005, have tended to fade as the security situation has not calmed significantly.

Accelerating Economic Reconstruction. Some believe that the key to calming Iraq is to accelerate economic reconstruction. According to this view, accelerated reconstruction will drain support for insurgents by creating employment, improving public services, and creating confidence in the government. This idea appears to have been incorporated into the President's "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq" document and the formation of the PRTs, as discussed above. Others doubt that economic improvement alone will produce major political results because the differences among Iraq's major communities are fundamental and resistant to economic solutions. In addition, the U.S. plan to transfer most reconstruction management to Iraqis by the end of 2007 might indicate that the Administration has not found this idea persuasive.

Internationalization Options. Some observers believe that the United States needs to recruit international help in stabilizing Iraq. One idea is to identify a high-level international mediator to negotiate with Iraq's major factions. In a possible move toward this option, in March 2006 President Bush appointed former Secretary of State James Baker to head a congressionally created "Iraq Study Group" to formulate options for U.S. policy in Iraq. (The conference report on the FY2006 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-234) provides $1 million for operations of the group.) However, there is no public indication, to date, that Baker himself might be such a mediator, and most experts believe that a mediator, if selected, would likely need to come from a country that is viewed by all Iraqis as neutral on internal political outcomes in Iraq. Another idea is to form a "contact group" of major countries and Iraqi neighbors to prevail on Iraq's factions to compromise. This idea is reflected in S.J.Res. 36, introduced May 8, 2006 by Senator Kerry.